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FRENTE REVOLUCIONARIA DE TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE

(REVOLUTIONARY FRONT FOR AN INDEPENDENT EAST TIMOR)

FRETILIN

Fr. Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Fr. Liam McKenna, S.J.
Fr. Brian McClorry, S.J.
CENTRE OF CONCERN FOR HUMAN DIGNITY
Heytrop College
11 Cavendish Square
London W1M OAN

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Dear friends

Since long ago I wanted to give a reply to the letter of Fr. Raymond G. Welmick, S.J.,d.d. 18th July, 1981 which I highly apreciated since it posed important questions related with the Timor problem and how to solve it, and, on the other hand, it showed again the solidarity work with the just struggle of the Maubere People for Independence and Liberation done in England by the Centre of Concern for Human Dignity, the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), the TAPOL organisation and the British Crmpaign for Independent East Timor (BCIET). However, I couldn't send my reply as soon as I wanted.

My expectations on the results of the UN vote on the question of East Timor, on November last, and also on the developmetns of Portuguese internal politics with regard to the Timor problem were the main reasons for this great delay. Anyhow, I can say that some of my initial feelings concerning the situation of East Timor in the international arena as result of the study of the content of the letter referred above and of FRETILIN's experience, become more clear.

As a matter of fact, we, FRETILIN, for the time being, consider that our action should be developed from the analisis of the following two points of thinking:

1. Today, the main target of Indonesian Government is the third world countries. Indonesia is concetrating its efforts in the Non-Aligned bloc in order to get the recognition of its sovereignity over East Timor while it continues to neutralise the western and socialist bountries. Indonesia is trying by every means to delete as quick as

possible the "Timor Question" from the UN agenda;

2. Portugal is unable to gain the international support in order to press Indonesian Government to enter in conversations which can safeguard the rights of the East Timorese People for self-determination and Independence.

I

Ironically, the Timor problem is caused by a third world nation - Indonesia. This country hardly fought to get its independence from dutch colonialism. But today, Indonesia is denying the same rights to the East Timorese People. This is a new phenomenon of thepost-colonial era: former colonial countries became colonial powers. To add to this fact, Indonesia played an important role in the founding of the Non-Aligned Mouvement. Of course, these facts are not new for you; but, I only mentioned it with the purpose to study and to see that although we might find some paralelisms or we might force some political developments which have ocurred already in other cases of decolonisation - example of Zimbabwe, we have to realise that in the case of East Timor we still have a long way to go. More clearly speaking: does FRETILIN accept a process of negotiations such as it hapened in Rodesia case with the Lancaster House talks? will FRETILIN accept a trilateral talks -Indonesia, Portugal, FRETILIN ? is FRETILIN ready to accept other timorese groups in such a process for a negotiated peace-setlement?

Well. Although these questions are legitimate and often they come from frineds who are seriously and honestly engaged in this common efforts to bring a bright future to the fate of the Maubere People, I consider that it is still premature to discuss on these levels for reasons that I am going to mention. However I want to assure you that FRETILIN is not at all againts NEGOTIATIONS since, in our opinion, any negotiation bethween two conflicting and opposing sides is an inevitably result of several combined factors: international solidarity, political and cultural resistence, armed struggle, change of international/regional balance of forces, growing up of internal (indonesian) opositíon to the continuation of the war, etc.. One day, when Indonesian Government is ready to negotiate, it will mean that the indonesian thesis of their sovereignity over East Timor is in danger. It also will mean a very big leap towards the freedom of my People. I can assure you that this is the position of FRETILIN!

After this short clarification on FRETILIN's position in relation to a negotiated peace-setlement, I would like to continue my initial process of thinking.

The Timor case has these particularities:

1. The Timor problem comes from a conflict bethween two third world Nations: Indonesia and East Timor. In the Rodesia case, the British colonialism was replaced by an internal colonialism, a racist regime;
2. In the Timor problem, both conflicting sides has got friends and supporters in the third world. In the case of Rodesia, all the third world nations were in favour of the Peopleof Zimbabwe and were against the racist regime of Ian Smith/Muzorewa;
3. In East Timor, the armed struggle today cannot be copared to that one waged by the ZANU and ZAPU fighters at the end of 1978;
4. As far as the Timor problem is concerned, all west and east european countries have abstained during the voting in the last UN debate except for Portugal, Greece, Iceland and Cyprus which voted in favour. Only the USSR and China in the socialist field voted in favour of East Timor. In the case of Rodesia, all socislist countries condemned the racist regime of Ian Smith. The same behaviour was taken by several western countries.

Besides these facts, we have to admit that:

5. The Portuguese Government failed completely to re-open the international discussion on the Timor question. The current portuguese Government is not a serious one concerning East Timor. The present coalition in the Government has promised a lot of things ; however, we have seen nothing. About four months ago, the forces behind the current Government instigated a public debate in the Television about the process of the so-called decolonisation of Timor during the period of 1974-75. As a matter of fact, we can say today without any risk of failing that it was purely an attempt to accuse the socialists and the comunists as the responsibles of the tragedy of East Timor. By doing so, the current Government played a medium-term game to show that, in case of their uncapability to solve the Timor problem, they are not the guilty ones.

Three weeks ago, the newapapers announced that the Portuguese Government made known to the General Eanes, President of Portugal that he should, from now on, take the case of East Timor since the Government has ended all its capacity and ressources!!! At this moment the Council of the Revolution is studying this problem.

All these considerations make us to arrive to the following points:

a. The Timor case is still far from being a case in which Portugal can be pressed by the international comunity in order to take upon herself her residual responsability;

b. The abstaining votes by the EEC and IGGI countries - except for Canada, USA, Australia, New Zeland and Japon which are in favour of Indonesia - means more comprehension to the indonesian position than tacit support to the East Timorese People not only because of their economic, political and strategic interests but also because Indonesia is backed by almost all OPEC countries, Muslim countries besides other important countries like India, Sri Lanka, ASEAN , etc..

c. The political struggle in the diplomatic and international field is today bethween two group of forces: on one hand, those who recognise the legitimacy of indonesian slvereignity over East Timor and, on the other hand, those who refuse to accept it;

d. Although the United Nations continue not to recognise the Indonesian thesis, the situation there is rather difficult. In the last UN vote the diference bethween the votes in favour and the votes against was 12 only ! We are very worried about that.

II

I would like to develop now some ideas, thoughts for a planned and combined action "in all fronts". Based on what I described before you can understand that in the diplomatic front and in the international work we defined as the top priority, for the time being:

the necessity to stop the general tendency to accept the Timor case as a lost cause or a "fait accopli "which means the acceptance of the indonesian claims. We should understand that today the Timor problem is not anymore in a diplomatic impasse!!!

A. As far as FRETELIN is concerned we are working already in a plann which aims at criating through diferent stages an international body with enough credibility for all parties involved - Indonesia, Portugal and FRETILIN. This international body will try to contact and press Indonesia to accept the international decisions - UN Resolutions, etc- or to go to a round-table Conference.

1. Thus, we hope to have soon, after our meeting of the FRETILIN leadership outside East Timor to be held on March next, in Maputo, Mozambique, a Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the countries which have been actively supporting the case of East Timor at the UN: Angola, Mozambique, São Tome and Principe, Cape Vert and Guinea-Bissau.

2. This Conference which will be chaired by FRETILIN will study and propose solutions and/or recomendations to some key countries which play relevant role in the Third World and which belong to the non-aligned bloc like India, some OPEC countries. It will be, in our viewpoint, the first attempt to bring together friendly Governments of the DRET (Democratic Republic of East Timor) like Mozambique, Cape Vert, Algeria, Madagascar, and friendly Governments of Indonesia like India, etc.. First of all, there is an extreme need to initiate the dialogue South-South in the Timor problem!

During this process, of course, Portugal and Brasil mainly the last that has been very active in the Latin America Nations can still try to work with other third world nations in order to reinforce the project of criating such a body. For this work, besides all relevant and recent informations from the internal situation in East Timor we will be documented by the material produced during the Lisbon TRIBUNAL on East Timor.

We are sure that when the Third World Nations(Of course, we don't mention Chili's Pinochet and his relatives) succed to fsolate Indonesia, we can, then, expect some change not only in the indonesian atitude but also in the western and socialist countries atitude towards East Timor.

Of course, meanwhile, FRETILIN will pay attention to Europe, USA and socialist bloc.

B. Now we arrive to the point focused in your letter: the need to combine and coordinate our joint efforts.

We, FRETILIN, are deeply touched by your readiness and constructive efforts that your letter has highly shown. I would like to express again our readiness to cooperate with our friends in the international solidarity movement towards a just solution of the Timor problem.

Therefore, I would like to point out some action-lines which could be developed by action-groups in Europe and in USA:

1. To demand the free access to East Timor for independent journalists of press, radio and television;

2. To demand the presence of humanitarian organisations and their representatives in East Timor to distribute the international relief aid that is

or will be chaneled to East Timor;

3. To counter-atack the indonesian propaganda. It is not an easy task since there are many interests behind this international silence of cumplicity. (We, east timorese, got to understand more and more the reasons why in Poland and East Timor cases the international reaction is so opposite!)

In this work it is important:

a- to relate the political causes of this desperate humanitarian situation in East Timor;

b- to stress always that the indonesian military ocupation has to face a strong resistance also in the political and military field which since 1979 entered into a new phase - the combination of the mobile guerrilla warfare with the underground resistence organised in the occupied areas under the centralised guidance of FRETILIN;

c- to underline that the massacres and the genocidal attempts are the indonesian reply to the iron-will of the Maubere People to be free from the indonesian colonial yoke;

d- to remind that a definitive solution for the Timor problem will depend on the convergence of the following three factors: i) development of the political and military resistence in East Timor, the "internal front" which is being recovered from the past (1978) setbacks; ii) the struggle for the defense of human rights in Indonesia and for democracy in Indonesia; iii) the international solidarity and diplomatic front against Indonesia;

4. To prevent the Western countries from any action which might lead them to recognise the indonesian sovereignity over East Timor. The political changes in France and Greece can be fully used in favour of the Maubere People's cause taking also into account that Indonesian Government is doing all her best to neutralise these potentialities.

The role of Vatican is also very important since any change from the present position will seriously afect the moral of a big part of the timorese population.

5. To organise the sending of telegrams, messages and/or letters to the President of Portugal, General Eanes to encourage him to go ahead with his determination to accomplish the article 307 of the Portuguese Constitution which consacrates the right of the East Timorese people to Independence. We are sure that any move from Portugal will be certainly wellcome by the Third World Nations. In this case, Portugal would gain for its prestige the support from

the Non-Aligned bloc, as a first step to press the EEC countries. I hardly would see the EEC countries pressing Portugal on the Timor problem!

You may know that, now, Indonesia is attacking Tanzania, Zambia, etc.. Last November, during the President Eanes tour in Southern African States, references in the joint Communiques issued by Eanes/Nierere, Eanes/Kaunda, Eanes/ /Machel, respectively, in Tanzania, Zambia and in Mozambique were made to the right to the People of East Timor to Independence. It would be important to point out also that any initiative to be carried out by Portugal should take into account the FRETILIN role in order to guarantee "ab initio" the cooperation of the legitimate representatives of the Maubere People.

The current portuguese Gorvernment has failed completely!

6. To act on the Embassies of the Third World Nations that today support Indonesian claims as well as on the political, cultural and religious institutions acting in those countries of the Third World to force a change of the country's policy vis-a-vis Indonesia and the Timor problem.

Finnally, dear friends, it is not an easy task.
I do hope that this letter will help you.
Looking forward to hearing from you soon,
with best regards, I remain

Sincerely yours

Abilio Araújo
Member of the CC of FRETILIN
and
Minister of State for Economic
and Social Affairs in the DRET